

Pulitzer prize winning American poet Robert Frost wrote that “poetry is a way of taking life by the throat.” If so, at least three young, South Valley poets already have a pretty firm grip on reality.

Each recently completed a ten week creative writing course sponsored by the Bernalillo County Parks and Recreation Department and nationally renowned poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, PhD. of Albuquerque. The course was conducted on weekdays after school at the Bernalillo County Computer Clubhouse next to the Westside Community Center at 1250 Isleta Blvd. SW. It culminated on May 10 with an evening presentation at the community center entitled “The Importance of a Piece of Paper.”

Here is a sample of three poets’ works.

South Valley
By: Lizbeth Escarsega

***South Valley means to me
Too many gangs and problems***

***They make me unable to concentrate
During school and I can not learn
What I’m supposed to learn***

***What should I do to learn?
All I know is that I live in the South Valley.***

The South Valley Means to Me...
By: Christina Sandoval

***The South Valley means to me that I get to hear the Sound of the birds
migrating north in the winter***

***... I can swim in the Rio Grande in the summer and need no fancy gym with
a pool.***

The South Valley is the best in the fall I can play in the leaves.

***At night I can sleep in peace and honor for my sisters. Before I go to sleep I
pray for the next day, Amen.***

What the South Valley Means...
By: Dominique Lucero

***What the South Valley means to me
Is my family and my friends.***

***It's me jumping and playing Around.
With my brothers
Laughing and joking around.***

***Celebrating god times
Comforting through the bad***

That's what the South Valley Means to me.

Twenty five students started the program and 14 finished it. They attend Kit Carson, Armijo, Atrisco, Los Padillas, and Pajarito Elementary Schools and Ernie Pyle and Harrison Middle Schools. All the schools are in the South Valley. The students are between the ages of eight and 14 and wrote poetry, composed music, and produced films. Course coordinator Tommie Gonzales says this is the first time the parks and recreation department has offered a program of this magnitude. She adds, "Reciting a poem in front of an audience is the best experience these children could have. Seeing how proud they are after reading their poems makes it all worth while."

Bernalillo County Commissioner Teresa L. Cordova, who represents the South Valley and attended the May presentation, says she was impressed by how much talent the students exhibited.

"It's always a tremendous pleasure for me to witness the strengths and abilities that our children possess," Commissioner Cordova says. "As an educator myself, I know how hard it is sometimes for kids to turn off their TVs, computers, and IPODS and focus on something that requires a lot of time and effort. I am so proud of what these young people are doing and I applaud the parks and recreation department for making it happen."